SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by ..... [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans and English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. The audio bulletins can be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za while the text bulletin can be downloaded from https://sarlnewsbulletin.wordpress.com/. To join the MailChimp bulletin mailing list, send an e-mail to the SARL Secretary.

In the news today:

THE SARL VHF/UHF DIGITAL CONTEST NEXT WEEKEND

THE SARL ENGAGES ICASA AT THE SPECTRUM PUBLIC HEARING

and

AMATEUR RADIO NEWS FROM THE EASTERN CAPE

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

We begin the bulletin with news of a silent key

It is with deep regret that we announce that the key of Joop Hesp, ZS6JP (ex ZS6AJS, ZS1AJS, and ZS6C) went silent on Thursday 9 September 2021. Joop celebrated his 90th birthday in July. He was a long-standing member of the West Rand Amateur Radio Club, a former Chairman and an Honorary Life Member. Joop loved CW and was well known for his CW operating skills, especially in any Dutch CW contest. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

PAUSE

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

THE SARL VHF/UHF DIGITAL CONTEST NEXT WEEKEND

The second leg of the SARL VHF/UHF Digital contest takes place from 05:00 to 11:00 UTC on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 September. On each day the six-hour contest period is split into two hours on 6 metres, then two hours on 2 metres, and the last two hours on 70 cm. All contacts must be two-way point to point. Stations exchange signal reports and their full six-digit maidenhead grid location. Submit your log sheet, it is on the Contest page of the League website, by 23:59 CAT on Sunday 26 September to sarlvhfuhfcontest@gmail.com on behalf of the 46 VHF/UHF Group. The log sheets of Multi operator, Club stations, and Portable/ Field stations MUST have the names of all the active operators on

the Summary section of the log sheet for certificate purposes. Turn to pages 47 to 49 of the Blue Book for all the rules. Also check the General Rules.

THE SARL WEDNESDAY 80 M CLUB SPRINT

The fifth leg of the SARL Wednesday 80 m Club Sprint takes place from 17:30 to 18:30 UTC (19:30 to 20:30 CAT) on Wednesday 15 September. The exchange is an RS or RST report, the name of your Club and your 4-character grid square (e.g., KG30). Submit your log sheets by 23:59 CAT on Monday 20 September by e-mail to zs4bfn@mweb.co.za. Get the rules on page 63 of the Blue Book.

THE SARL ENGAGES ICASA AT THE SPECTRUM PUBLIC HEARING

This past week the SARL presented amateur radio's frequency requirements during the three days-long public hearing about the Draft National Radio Frequency Plan. The main points of the SARL presentation were about the 160 metre band and the omission of the amateur allocation in the 40 MHz band. Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV reminded ICASA about an agreement reached a few years ago to allocate 1 810 – 2 000 kHz to the amateur service. This was however not taken up in a previous draft frequency plan upon which the SARL at one of the ICASA/SARL Liaison meetings reminded ICASA of the agreement. The SARL was assured that this would be corrected. The current draft only shows an amateur allocation of 1 810 – 1 850 kHz. Currently radio amateurs in South Africa still have access to full 1 810 – 2 000 kHz as per Annexure I of the current Radio Frequency Regulations gazetted on 31 March 2015.

The other major point of discussion was the omission of the 40 MHz band. Amateur radio has an allocation of 40,675 - 40,685 MHz for propagation research. The SARL suggests that this may have been an oversight and asked ICASA to correct this. While it is currently not in the draft frequency plan, radio amateurs in South Africa are still licensed to use the 40 MHz band as per Schedule I of the current radio regulations. In his presentation, ZS6AKV told the hearing that currently, a beacon is operating in Polokwane and that some interesting reports were recently received from a station in the UK. With the new sunspot cycle this frequency is of importance for sporadic E and other propagation mode studies. Recently the FCC in the USA issued two amateurs with experimental licenses to carry out propagation studies. Currently there are discussions with the USA amateurs to launch a joint propagation study project. The band is also of interest to carry out meteor scatter studies and the possible application of meteor scatter to monitor the SARL Next Generation Beacons.

The SARL also proposed to ICASA to reconsider the power limit of 1 W EIRP on 135.7 to 137.8 and 472 to 479 kHz and allow 26 dBW. Concerning the 60 metre band, the SARL requested that for clarity the frequencies 5 350 – 5 450 kHz and 5 290 kHz be shown on the main table and not just in footnote NF0 (NF zero).

The chairperson of the hearing, Councillor Peter Zimri, thanked the SARL for

the concise and clear presentation. There were no questions from the panel nor the public. It is now over to ICASA to consider the SARL proposal. The next stage will be the publication of the final National Radio Frequency Plan.

THE SARL 100 WORKING GROUP

The SARL 100 WG is currently compiling the history of the SARL in preparation for the centennial celebrations in 2025. The idea is to do research into the history of the SARL from its establishment until now. This history is our history and affects each one of us. We, as members of the SARL and the amateur community, can help make this project a success. No contribution is too small.

The history of your Club is important as well as, just to name a few examples, SARL HAMNET for emergency communications, the Hammies, the YLs and BACAR. Where did it all begin and where is it now? All these groups are an integral part of the SARL. Do you have a suggestion that can help? Do you have a photograph with details that you can donate? We have contacted the National Archives and the National Library in Cape Town; both these institutions are on board and enthusiastic about the SARL 100 project.

You can also provide a major contribution. Thank you to all the radio amateurs who have already provided valuable contributions, it is encouraging to work with so many enthusiastic amateurs. Contact Anette Jacobs, ZR6D on 073 1999 032 or by e-mail to jhjacobsza@gmail.com with any contributions.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

AMATEUR RADIO NEWS FROM THE EASTERN CAPE

The first edition of the post-Covid TransBaviaans Mountain Bike Race was held from 17 to 29 August and 3 to 5 September. Several of the rules were changed to accommodate curfew and social distancing and these impacted the support staff who needed to go in on the Friday afternoon/evening to be in place and in time for the earlier start on Saturday.

PEARS with the help of SARL HAMNET Eastern Cape once again provided the emergency and logistical communications through the kloof to bring the race alive and to the people. Not only were they throughout the kloof - where even mobile phones cannot reach - but they made sure the organisers knew where the leaders were on their way through as well. Checkpoints were at Sandtvlakte, Smitskraal, Bergplaas and Kondomo with the finish in Jefferies Bay and the radio control from Port Elizabeth. A portable repeater was setup on the Grassnek pass to link Sandtvlakte and Smitskraal to Bergplaas and the rest of the PEARS repeater network. While the radio control was done from Port Elizabeth for the first time, the regulars - Tony, ZR2TX and Bevan, ZS2RL manned the control centre. Once again, a big thank you to all who helped!

Over the past weekend, while manning one of the checkpoints for the Transbaviaans Mountain bike race, Glen, ZS2GV and Kevern, ZR2BK operated some HF

and managed to activate the Baviaanskloof (ZSFF-0059) for Parks On The Air. Glen, considered locally as 'rare-dx' on HF, managed to work a pileup! Both Glen and Kevern managed to get enough contacts to activate the park!

The Border Radio Club assisted with communications for the Ironman 70.3 in East London. In the spirit of post-Covid sports events, the Ironman 70.3 was once again on the streets of East London on Sunday 5 September. Members of the Border Radio Club provided communications for the event and manned several points along the route.

Lunga, ZS2LN and the Bisho Hammies were invited to assist the Border Radio Club with the Ironman 70.3 in East London. This became the start of a great weekend. Although the Ironman event was on the Sunday morning, the Hammies started the weekend by camping at Lunga's QTH from the Friday evening! The boys were collected from Bisho and taken to Lunga's QTH some 60 km away. The boys were however dropped off 21 km short of their destination and given some instruction in survival and navigation and sent on their way. They made their way to Lunga's QTH on foot. Lunga managed the terrain in his motorized wheelchair!

Friday night was some serious planning with events and recruitment ideas on the agenda. On the Saturday they played radio. Lunga discussed the J-Pole antenna and tropoducting contacts with PE. Later it was the turn of the HF dipole and Lunga showed them his new dipole. Saturday afternoon they made contacts with Kevern, ZR2BK and Glen, ZS2GV in the Baviaanskloof, and got their first taste of POTA! Sunday morning was an early start, but the highlight of a fun-filled radio weekend. Lunga and the Hammies would like to thank the Border Radio Club for the opportunity to be part of this great event. Lunga, ZS2LN with Ambesiwe, ZU2ASN and Olothando, ZU2OXI assisted and had a lot of fun!

THE SARL NEXT GENERATION BEACON FUND STANDS AT R28 150

The crowdfunding initiative to collect funds for the SARL Next Generation Beacon programme was initiated by AMSAT SA. During the past week, R1 650 was received from three donors. The fund is moving ever so slowly to the target of R60 000. With your contribution, we could break the halfway mark this week. AMSAT SA which contributed R5 000 is challenging clubs and other organisations to equal or better their contribution.

The SARL beacon workgroup is currently working on the development of a reverse beacon network and researching the possibility of using meteor scatter on 40 MHz to monitor beacon signals. Follow progress by tuning into Amateur Radio Today when Brian Jacobs presents his weekly update in Focus on VHF and Above. It can also be downloaded from the SARL website. Visit the Next Generation Beacon web page for articles, videos, updates, and a list of donors. There are links on the SARL and AMSAT SA home pages.

AMSAT SA and the SARL thank all who have thus far contributed. Help us to make it happen by donating to the fund and reach the target of R60 000 over the next month. A list of donors is available from the link on www.sarl.org.za. Visit www.amsatsa.org.za and make your contribution by clicking on one of the payment buttons for a R50, R250 or R1 000 donation or multiples thereof. The button will take you to the Payfast website where you need to enter your credit or debit card details. Please also add your call sign after your surname.

CONTEST NEWS

Seventeen logs were received for the ZS4 Sprint held on Sunday 18 April. The logs came from ZS1 - 1 log sheet, ZS2 - 3 log sheets, ZS3 - 4 log sheets, ZS4 - 1 log sheet, ZS5 - 1 log sheet and ZS6 - 8 log sheets.

1st Johannes van Zijl, ZS4DZ - 81 points

2nd Gerhard Coetzee, ZS3TG - 58 points

3rd Michael Steenkamp, ZS2MIC - 53 points.

The certificates will be e-mailed to every participant who submitted a log sheet. The ZS4SRK committee would like to thank everyone who submitted a log sheet and also those who took part by giving away points. We look forward to seeing an increase in the number of log sheets submitted for the 2022 ZS4 Sprint. We also hope that the band conditions have improved by then.

CLUB NEWS

The Annual General Meeting of the Sasolburg Amateur Radio Club was held on Saturday 4 September 2021. The selfless work of the outgoing Chairman, Riaan Greeff, ZS4PR and his Committee was recognized. Even in the difficult times brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Club excelled in all areas it participated in. Congratulations to the newly elected Committee under the leadership of the new Chairman, Louis Haarhoff, ZS6BD who takes over the reins with the trust of the club members.

The AGM of the Bloemfontein ARC will take place from 14:30 CAT on Saturday 18 September at the Club House at CBC School in Waverley Road. After the meeting a 'bring and braai' will be held. Call-ins on the Naval Hill 145,600 Repeater.

The Boland Amateur Radio Club will hold its first members' meeting of the year on 18 September 2021. It will also be BARK's AGM. The meeting will take place at the Wamakersvallei Voortrekker terrain in Church Street, Wellington, and starts at 11:00 CAT. After the meeting, a "bring and braai" will be enjoyed. Braai wood will be provided. BARK invites all members and interested parties who would like to know more about amateur radio and the Boland Club, to attend the meeting.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that solar activity is expected to be at low to moderate levels. There are currently several active sunspot regions visible and some minor C-class flaring activity is possible. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around 36. The 15 to 30 m bands will during the early mornings and late afternoons provide some good DX fun. For more information, please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za.

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

13 September – The West Rand ARC meeting

15 September – The SARL 80 m Wednesday Club Sprint

15 and 16 September – Yom Kippur

18 September – The Magalies, Highway, Bloemfontein, and Boland ARC meetings

18 and 19 September – The SARL VHF/UHF Digital contest

21 September – The PEARS and Border ARC meetings

22 September - The Spring Equinox at 21:21 CAT

24 September – Heritage and National Braai Day; the ZS SOTA Spring Activity Day and registration for the October RAE closes

25 September – The CTARC meeting

25 and 26 September – the CQ WW RTTY contest

26 September – The ZS1 Sprint

28 September – The Secunda ARC meeting

1 October – The Provincial Schools close

2 October – The East Rand Flea Market

To conclude our bulletin, a recap of our leading news story:

The second leg of the SARL VHF/UHF Digital contest takes place from 05:00 to 11:00 UTC on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 September. On each day the six-hour contest period is split into two hours on 6 metres, then two hours on 2 metres, and the last two hours on 70 cm.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans, if possible, by following the News Inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to be included in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly radio programme, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 CAT. The programme can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band by courtesy of Louis, ZS5LP. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY, can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 CAT on 3 620 kHz.

We welcome your signal reports, comments, and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin written by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, proof read by Herman Erasmus, ZS6CTA and read by .....

From the News team, best wishes for the week ahead.